

# Help me **be healthy**



## **Birth to 6 months**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I weigh \_\_\_\_\_ pounds. I am \_\_\_\_\_ inches long.

A special note for me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# I am your baby.

## Please help me.

I want to grow strong in body, heart, and mind.  
I grow best when you:

- ♥ Hold and cuddle me.
- ♥ Smile and talk to me.
- ♥ Listen to me when I “talk” to you with my face and body.

## Feed me right...with food and love.

- ♥ Feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron for the first year. Breast milk or formula is the only food I need for the first 4 to 6 months.
- ♥ I know when I need to eat. Feed me when I show I am hungry. I know how much to eat. Let me eat until I show I am full.



**I show you when I am hungry.** I move my arms and legs a lot. I turn my head and open my mouth. I might suck on my hand or fuss a little. Please feed me before I cry. I eat best when I am calm. Let's find a quiet place to eat.

**I show you when I am full.** I stop sucking and let go of the nipple. I look relaxed or sleepy. Ask me if I am full. Let me decide if I want to stop eating. Once I get full, I might frown, fuss, and kick if you keep feeding me.



# You want the best for me!

**I eat more when I have a growth spurt.** I will want to nurse longer or more often at the breast. Or, I will act hungry after I finish a bottle. If you breastfeed me, your body will make more milk. If I drink formula, add a little more to the bottle.

**How do you know I eat enough?** I wet 6 or more diapers a day and the doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

## Birth to 4 months-

I might want to eat every 2 to 3 hours (about 8 to 12 times in 24 hours). My tummy can hold about 2 to 3 ounces at a time.

## 4 to 6 months-

I might want to eat every 3 to 4 hours (about 6 to 8 times in 24 hours). My tummy can hold about 4 to 6 ounces at a time.

## I need your touch.

**Hold me when you feed me.** I feel safe in your arms. Look at my face and into my eyes. I will learn to look back. I love to look at your face. Talk to me. I will learn to smile and coo.

Sometimes I take a break from eating. I am not full yet. I just want to rest or share some special time with you.

Help me stay awake while you feed me. If I fall asleep with milk in my mouth, I could choke or get an earache.



## Keep me safe.

I can get sick from germs and the wrong food.  
Please:

- ♥ Wash your hands before you feed me or fix my food.
- ♥ If you use a bottle to feed me, put only pumped breast milk or formula in it.
- ♥ Mix up formula the way the can says or how the doctor tells you.
- ♥ Store bottles of breast milk or formula in the refrigerator. Use them in 48 hours.
- ♥ Never heat my bottle or food in a microwave oven. It can get too hot and burn my mouth.
- ♥ Throw out breast milk or formula left in the bottle after I eat.
- ♥ Do not feed me water.
- ♥ Do not feed me honey or food made with it.
- ♥ Do not let me eat (or taste) food you are eating.

## When can I try a new food?

I grow best on breast milk or formula. Do not feed me any other food until I am 4 to 6 months old. Then, ask my doctor if I am ready to try a new food. I must be able to:

- ♥ Sit up and hold my head steady.
- ♥ Show I want food by opening my mouth to take it from a spoon.
- ♥ Show I do not want food by closing my mouth or turning my head away from you.



My first food must be plain and smooth. Start with baby rice cereal. I get it from WIC. Mix the cereal in a bowl with breast milk or formula. Make it thin.



Sit and face me. Smile and tell me I get to taste cereal. Put a little cereal in a baby spoon. Touch my lips with it. If I won't eat the cereal, wait a week and try again.

If I eat the cereal, feed it to me once a day. If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, **stop** feeding the cereal. Tell the doctor. These are signs I might not be ready. It may take one week to see any signs.

If I do not show any signs, it is safe to eat rice cereal. You can make it thicker and let me eat a little more. I might eat 2 or more tablespoons of cereal 2 times a day. Throw out cereal left in the dish after I eat.

The next baby cereal to try is oatmeal or barley. Pick one to try first. Let me eat it for a week. Watch for signs I am not ready. If I do not show any signs, it is safe for me to eat it.

- ♥ Wait until I am 6 months old to try any other new foods.
- ♥ Please talk to WIC if you have questions about feeding me.

### Spit up...Gas...Dirty Diapers

Babies must get used to food in their tummies. So, we spit up, get gas, and grunt and turn red when we have a bowel movement. It does not hurt and goes away as we grow.



- ♥ I spit up less if I am calm when I eat and stop eating when I get full.
- ♥ I swallow air when I eat. If I swallow too much, I might need to be burped. Wait until I stop eating to burp me. Hold me with my tummy against your chest or lap. Gently pat or rub my back.
- ♥ I might have one or more bowel movements a day. Sometimes, I might not have any for a day or two. This is not constipation. Constipation is a hard, dry stool that hurts to pass and makes me cry.

### Play with me!

Please don't keep me in a baby carrier or infant seat. Put me on a blanket on the floor. Watch how I stretch and kick my legs and move my arms. I am making them stronger.

Put me on my tummy. I will learn to push myself up with my arms. I will learn to roll over.



### Look what I can do!

I am ready to learn about you, about me, and the world I live in. I learn best when I feel happy, loved, and safe.

#### Birth to 3 months-

The world is new to me. It can be scary. I cry a lot at first. Crying is my way to say I need you. When you come to me, I calm down. I learn that you care.

I must learn what day and night are. At first, I sleep 2 to 3 hours, wake up, eat, and go back to sleep again. It might take 3 months or more to learn to sleep through the night. Please be patient as I learn.

I know your voice. I like to watch you and learn what you do. Show things to me and tell me about them.

#### 4 to 6 months-

I start to settle into a routine. I can sleep longer at night. I am growing strong and active.

I can hold my head up. I use my hands to pick things up and put them in my mouth. Keep an eye on me so I don't choke.

I know my name when you say it. I babble *ba-ba-ba!* I can laugh. Let's play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake. Please read to me. Show me the pictures and tell me what they are.



## Health and Safety Tips

- ♥ I need check ups and shots to stay healthy. I should visit the doctor a few days after birth and before one month, then at 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months of age.
- ♥ If I am breastfed, ask the doctor if I need a vitamin D supplement.
- ♥ Clean my mouth after I eat. Wipe my gums with a clean, wet, soft cloth.
- ♥ Put me on my back to sleep (unless the doctor says not to). Use a firm mattress. Keep pillows, quilts, and toys out of my bed.
- ♥ Keep me away from cigarette and other tobacco smoke. Smoke hurts my lungs and can make me sick.
- ♥ Never leave me alone at bath time or while changing me.
- ♥ It's the law! Buckle me into an infant car seat before we ride in a car. Install my seat in the car's back seat, facing backwards.



Office of the Maryland WIC Program

1-800-242-4WIC

<http://mdwic.org>

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